

Carotid Ultrasound

What is a carotid ultrasound?

A carotid ultrasound is a diagnostic study that uses sound waves to image the carotid arteries. Among the structures able to be seen with sound waves are the arteries coming out of the heart and supplying oxygenated blood to the head. The arteries are seen through the use of an ultrasound wand (the transducer) which passes harmless sound waves into the body and receives them back. The images are seen on the ultrasound machine and recorded for detailed evaluation at a later time. The test takes about 45 minutes.

Do I need to do anything for the test?

The simple answer is no. You may eat and drink prior to the test. You may take your usual medicines before the test. Please do not wear turtlenecks or high-collar shirts.

What will happen during the test?

The sonographer will meet you in the waiting room and escort you to the examination room. The sonographer will have you lay down on a table on your back. You will have a small pillow to rest your head on. **If you are unable to lay in this position, please inform your physician.** This can alter the test results. The sonographer will place some ECG patches on your chest to record your heartbeat. The transducer will then be coated with ultrasound gel to allow for imaging. The sonographer will then take pictures of your arteries on both sides of your neck in order to obtain a complete study. Following the procedure, you will be free to go. The exam will be interpreted with 48 hours and the results will be available to the ordering physician within 3-4 days.

Questions?

If you have any questions before or after the test, please do not hesitate to contact Metropolitan Heart and Vascular Institute at 763-427-9980.